E-fficiencies in G-GOV

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Geographic information and analysis has supported environmental protection decision making since before the inception of the Environmental Protection Agency. So it became quite natural for the Agency to adopt an automated approach to managing, analyzing, and displaying geographic information. The challenge became how to deliver an old science and a new technology (Geographic Information Systems, GIS) to those that really needed it to perform their jobs. Desktop deployments of sophisticated GIS software to GIS and other enlightened professionals certainly has seen much success over the years. However, with extensive personnel training and subsequent knowledge retention issues, software and platform configuration problems, software licensing and data access, the percentage of EPA employees and their partners that have been enabled with the geospatial data processing tools, essential to support their business processes, remained small. Since 1994, the strategy at EPA for the deployment of sophisticated spatial analytical and mapping products has been driven by the standards-based, communication protocols of the World Wide Web. EnviroMapper debuted in March of 1998 and since then over two dozen EPA applications have used its mapping services. Today, through the advances of spatial database technologies and access to geospatial data via the web, analytical capacity delivered through a web browser has expanded to the degree that a short time ago was found only through high-end GIS workstations.